

THE BEST WAY TO HELP A STRAY CAT

Leave the cat in place

If the cat is not in danger, injured, or sick, leave the cat alone and/or put them back where they were found. A stray cat's best chance of finding their owner is to leave them alone.

- Lost cats are up to 50 times more likely to be reunited with their owners if they stay in their neighborhood than through an animal shelter.¹
- Only 3% of cats are reunited with their families through a shelter.²
- 75% of lost cats are found within 1/3 of a mile from home.³

Historically, “stray cats” have made up the majority of intake at shelters across the country. This can leave shelters crowded and less able to provide appropriate care for animals who do need sheltering, such as sick and injured animals, or those whose owners can no longer keep them.⁴

When should I bring a cat to a shelter?

If you find a lost cat in any of these situations, please bring them to the shelter that contracts with your municipality.

- In danger
- Injured or sick
- Orphaned kitten(s)

HSSW holds most of the municipal contracts in Rock County.



¹National Animal Care & Control Association,

<https://www.nacanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Animal-Control-Intake-of-Free-Roaming-Cats.pdf>

²Shelter Animals Count, 2025 Year End Report, <https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/2025-report>

³Huang L, Coradini M, Rand J, Morton J, Albrecht K, Wasson B, Robertson D. Search Methods Used to Locate Missing Cats and Locations Where Missing Cats Are Found. *Animals (Basel)*. 2018 Jan 2;8(1):5. doi: 10.3390/ani8010005. PMID: 29301322; PMCID: PMC5789300. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5789300/>

⁴National Animal Care & Control Association,

<https://www.nacanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Animal-Control-Intake-of-Free-Roaming-Cats.pdf>



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